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UNCLAS CAIRO 000873

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EGYPT FREES REMAINING SUDANESE ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM
DETENTION

REF: CAIRO 783 AND PREVIOUS

On February 12, Egypt released from detention the remaining 156 Sudanese asylum-seekers who had been held since a December 30 confrontation with Egyptian police over refugee resettlement policies. Egyptian state media first reported the release and stated that the detainees would not be deported. MFA contacts confirmed the press report February 13, and said the Sudanese were "staying with relatives and other Sudanese." MFA Director of the Office of Refugee Affairs, Nasser Hamzawy, told poloff that the Sudanese had been provided with travel documents that would allow them to remain in Egypt legally for "two or three months." Hamzawy noted that Egypt, despite its legal right to expel the detained Sudanese, had chosen not to deport the group to Sudan.

RICCIARDONE